



NORTHEAST IDAHO

BONNEVILLE, BUTTE, CLARK, CUSTER, FREMONT, JEFFERSON, LEMHI, MADISON, & TETON COUNTIES

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

The seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate for the Bonneville Labor Market Area (LMA) remained constant at 4.1 percent over the month and at a year-over-year comparison as shown in Northeast Table 1. The four counties showed some mixed movement, however slight. Bingham County remained constant over the month at 4.9 percent, but increased one-tenth of a percentage point from February 2001. Bonneville County also remained unchanged over the month at 3.7 percent, but increased one-tenth of a percentage point from one year ago.

Butte County experienced the largest monthly percentage change of the four, decreasing five-tenths of a percentage point to 4.0 percent and decreasing one-tenth of a percentage point from a year-over-year comparison. Jefferson County increased three-tenths of a percentage point over the month to 4.3 percent, but remained constant from February 2001. Idaho Falls, the largest city in the LMA, experienced no change in the unemployment rate over the month and decreased one-tenth of a percentage point from one year ago.

Of the other counties in Northeast Idaho, Clark County showed the largest percentage change in the unemployment rate. An increase of 1.3 percentage points brought the rate to a current 5.4 percent as extreme cold temperatures and inclement weather still affected the larger businesses over the month. The county only experienced a one-tenth of a percentage point increase from February 2001. Custer County's rate of 8.9 percent was an increase of one-tenth of a percentage point over the month and a decrease of 1.6 percentage points from one year ago after the fires and mining layoffs of 2000. Fremont County's rate, at 6.2 percent, decreased two-tenths of a percentage point from the previous month and decreased nine-tenths of a percentage point from February 2001. Concentration on economic develop-

Northeast Idaho Table 1: Labor Force & Employment
Bonneville, Bingham, Butte, & Jefferson counties

	Feb 2002*	Jan 2002	Feb 2001	% Change From Last Month	% Change From Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	81,710	81,470	81,060	0.3	0.8
Unemployment	3,360	3,320	3,280	1.2	2.4
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.1	4.1	4.1		
Total Employment	78,350	78,140	77,770	0.3	0.7
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	80,320	80,010	79,740	0.4	0.7
Unemployment	3,930	3,820	3,970	2.9	-1.0
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.9	4.8	5.0		
Total Employment	76,390	76,190	75,770	0.3	0.8
JOB BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**	60,110	59,980	60,670	0.2	-0.9
Goods-Producing Industries	8,530	8,580	8,590	-0.6	-0.7
Mining & Construction	3,600	3,660	3,310	-1.6	8.8
Manufacturing	4,930	4,920	5,280	0.2	-6.6
Food Processing	2,460	2,480	2,930	-0.8	-16.0
Ind. & Com. Mach. & Computer Equip.	500	470	450	6.4	11.1
All Other Manufacturing	1,970	1,970	1,900	0.0	3.7
Service-Producing Industries	51,580	51,400	52,080	0.4	-1.0
Transportation, Comm., & Utilities	2,300	2,330	2,300	-1.3	0.0
Wholesale Trade	5,230	5,220	5,740	0.2	-8.9
Retail Trade	10,970	10,970	10,810	0.0	1.5
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	1,890	1,880	1,850	0.5	2.2
Services	20,620	20,550	20,680	0.3	-0.3
Government Administration	5,020	5,030	5,200	-0.2	-3.5
Government Education	5,550	5,420	5,500	2.4	0.9

*Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

ment and ML Technology's expansion in the county is helping stabilize seasonal and agricultural swings. Lemhi County's rate of 7.8 percent showed a month-over-month increase of four-tenths of a percentage point, but a decrease of 1.1 percentage points year-over-year because of the fires of 2000. Madison County remained constant over the month and decreased three-tenths of a percentage point from February 2001. The county should continue to see a very low unemployment rate as BYU-Idaho and the economy are both experiencing gradual growth resulting in new job creation. Teton County experienced a decrease of five-tenths of a percentage point in its unemployment rate over the month, at 3.3 percent, as resorts and lodges were full of tourists, and Olympic teams and challengers utilized the area for preparing for the games. However, the county was up six-tenths of a percentage point from February 2001 as the national economy and the effects of the September 11 terrorist attacks slowed tourism overall.

Smaller variances were seen in *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* over the month as the LMA experienced a total increase of 130 jobs. *Goods-Producing Industries* showed a decrease of 50 jobs, most all in *Construction* as expected at this

time in the year. The other industries only changed slightly. *Service-Producing Industries* increased 180 jobs, with the major increases stemming from *Government Education* and *Services*. *Government Education* added 130 jobs as all schools were back into session after holiday breaks. *Services* increased 70 jobs as *Social Services*, *Non-profit Organizations*, *Health Services*, and *Hotels & Other Lodging* equally combined to offset the decrease of 60 jobs in *Business Services*.

A year-over-year comparison was a little more dramatic as *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* decreased by 560. *Goods-Producing Industries* only decreased by 60 jobs (*Food Processing's* loss of 470 jobs overpowered a gain in *Construction* of 290 jobs) while *Service-Producing Industries* accounted for the remaining decrease of 500 jobs. *Wholesale Trade* lost the most, 510 jobs, while *Government Administration* lost 180. *Wholesale Trade* has been seeing this trend over the last few months as last year's shortage of water and overproduction of potatoes led to such a low price that many farmers did not sell in an attempt to bring prices to a profitable level. This situation led to apprehension for this season, several making the decision to grow other crops or reduce the amount of acreage usually used on this crop to avoid a repeat of the past season. Technological improvements in the warehouses that "ready" the product have also decreased the need for some workers.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Bonneville County

- Tasty's franchise, owned by Kent Fife, will open in Idaho Falls at the 500 block of South Woodruff. This will be Fife's fourth restaurant and will serve doughnuts made of potato flour, breakfast, soup, and sub sandwiches. The end of March is the anticipated opening. The company's web address is <http://www.trymeimtasty.com>.
- Idaho Falls City Council unanimously voted to allow Wal-Mart the right to two entrances along Hitt Road where it proposes to build a new supercenter. Hitt Road has experienced great growth over the past two-and-a-half years with the addition of Edwards Cinemas and many retail stores. With the Grand Teton Mall on the west side of Hitt and several retail businesses on the east side of Hitt, the intersection just south of where the supercenter will be located has become extremely busy. Much more traffic is anticipated with the opening of the supercenter. Eastern Idaho Technical College (EITC) agreed to move its northern entrance to the south since it sits across from the proposed Wal-Mart location so that a traffic signal could be put in to help traffic flows for both entities. Wal-Mart's purchase of the 30-acre plus parcel should be finalized soon. Although the supercenter is still awaiting the city of Ammon's approval of the site plan and Bonneville

County has to grant access to the property along Hitt Road, Wal-Mart is confident that it will start building soon.

- Eastern Idaho Technical College hosted the Center for New Direction's 17th annual Job Options Conference for Women on March 19. Over 160 attendees, presenters, and organizers were in attendance where Mayor Milam of Idaho Falls was the keynote speaker for the opening ceremony. Many great workshops followed with a tour of the EITC facilities and exhibits of local industries and EITC programs.

Madison County

- Collaborative Genetics Inc. (CGI), a biotechnical company that develops diagnostic test strips to determine anthrax and botulinum toxins from bodily fluids, has announced plans to build in Rexburg. The California-based company will start with a 5,600-square-foot building in the Rexburg Business Park and employ 18 people within the first year. The projected employment will rise to about 130 after three years. The company expects completion by July. The strips can show results in as little as three to four minutes and can be used in livestock, food-industries businesses, hospitals, and clinical labs along with expected anti-terror and military applications. Company President Bruce Tedeschi plans to team up with Idaho State University's College of Pharmacy and Department of Biological Sciences to develop the tests. Tedeschi moved to Rigby from San Diego about a year ago and was very impressed with Rexburg and Clair Boyle, executive director of the Madison Economic Development Corporation. Tedeschi has over 25 years of experience in research and development, marketing, and inventory control for many biotechnology companies.

Custer County

- Way Out West Realty opened a new office at 1303 Hwy 93 South in the Bent Rod Office Complex in Challis. The office specializes in residential, ranch, and recreational opportunities. Sandra Hill, broker and owner, runs the business with two associates; Barbara Hawkins and Robert Piva. The phone number is 879-2211.

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